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ABSTRACT

Students who voluntarily withdrew from Indiana University's Bloomington campus after completing two successful years of their undergraduate curriculum were surveyed. The study attempts to ascertain the degree to which various personal, academic, and financial factors entered into the decision to terminate or interrupt their educational program, and to determine a student's employment and educational situation during the academic semester subsequent to withdrawal. Voluntary withdrawals were classified into three groups: (1) dropouts, students who terminated their formal education; (2) stopouts, students who resumed their education programs at Indiana University after a brief interruption; and (3) transfers, students who continued their education at another university. The groups were compared on selected academic and biographic measures. The decision to leave the university was found to be related to four dimensions: academic environment, financial demands, career focus, and social/personal environment. The withdrawals as a group considered their dissatisfaction with the academic environment, uncertainty about their career choice and their dissatisfaction with personal achievement as dominant in the decision to exit the university. Stopouts and dropouts held stronger opinions than did transfers about the individual aspects related to their withdrawal decisions. Implications of the findings for Indiana University are discussed. The survey questionnaire is appended. (Author/SF)

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The Voluntary Withdrawal: A Survey of Stopouts, Dropouts and Transfers from Indiana University

INDIANA STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Number Forty-Two

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THE VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL:
A SURVEY OF STOPOUTS, DROPOUTS AND TRANSFERS FROM INDIANA UNIVERSITY

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INDIANA STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION
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DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
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1979

Abstract

This study investigated voluntary withdrawals, students who left Indiana University's Bloomington campus after completing two successful years of their undergraduate curriculum. Voluntary withdrawals who exited the University after the Spring 1976 semester were classified into three groups: dropouts, students who terminated their formal education; stopouts, students who resumed their education programs at I.U. after a brief interruption; and transfers, students who continued their education at another university. The groups were compared on selected academic and biographic measures.

The decision to leave the University was found to be related to four dimensions: academic environment, financial demands, career focus, and social/personal environment. The withdrawals as a group considered their dissatisfaction with the academic environment, uncertainty about their career choice and their dissatisfaction with personal achievement as dominant in the decision to exit the University. Stopouts and dropouts held stronger opinions than did the transfers about the individual aspects that related to their withdrawal decision.

The implications of the findings for the University were discussed.

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Introduction

A 1950's nationwide study of two-year and four-year colleges found that 40 percent of the entering freshmen never graduate (Iffert, 1957). In the 1960's and early 1970's this pattern and percentage has remained surprisingly constant (Panos & Astin, 1968; Bayer et al., 1973). In numbers, this means that of the 7.6 million undergraduate students in this country's institutions of higher education in 1971, over 2 million completely withdrew (Pantages & Creedon, 1978). With these raw figures and the projected decline in the college-age population in the 1980's, retention of students may become the name of the survival game for academic institutions.

Students who leave higher education prior to degree completion may be classified into two major categories: academic dropouts and nonacademic or voluntary withdrawals. Although the overall student attrition rate has remained fairly constant, a number of researchers have noted a decrease in the percentage of students dropping out because of academic failure and an increase in the percentage of students voluntarily withdrawing because of dissatisfaction and disillusionment (Pervin, 1965; Newman, 1971). The National Longitudinal Study of the high school class of 1972 (NCES) revealed that in the freshman year nonacademic withdrawals exceeded academic withdrawals by ratios of 2 to 1 in four-year colleges and 4 to 1 in two-year colleges. The voluntary withdrawals from four-year colleges most often cited financial difficulties, marriage, and the desire to get practical experience as their reason for exiting. Voluntary withdrawals from two-year colleges most frequently reported the desire to get practical experience and a job offer as their reasons for exiting. However, almost half of the students surveyed indicated that their decision to leave a university was predicated on a reason not listed on the questionnaire. Cope & Hannah (1975) contend that ultimately it is the fit between the student and the college which determines persistence. The authors believe that the reported lower attrition rates at prestigious private universities and state-supported universities with strong national reputations is a function of greater self-selection by the students who attend these institutions and the correspondingly greater compatability between the student and the institution.

Tinto (1975) has presented a theoretical model which also attempts to account for dropout behavior. He asserts that persistence is dependent upon integration into both the social and academic systems of the institute of higher education. Traditionally, academic failure has been attributed not only to insufficient ability but also to an overemphasis by the student on social integration. Tinto suggests that an overemphasis on academic integration or inadequate integration into either social system can similarly explain dropout behavior of academically-qualified students. According to the model integration into either

system is a function of the student's commitment to attaining an education (goal commitment) and his or her commitment to the institution. These commitments are in turn influenced by the student's family background, ability, and pre-college schooling experiences.

Some information is already available concerning the attrition patterns and characteristics of voluntary withdrawals at Indiana University. In a study of persistence of entering freshmen, Chase et al. (1976) found that the percentage of voluntary withdrawals steadily increases as the entering freshman class proceeds up the academic ladder. Only 2 percent of the 1971 entering freshman class became voluntary withdrawals at the end of their first semester. In contrast, almost 10 percent had voluntarily left the University at the end of the fourth semester. Voluntary withdrawals at I.U., as a group, are overrepresented by females, out-of-state students, students whose parents are not alumni of I.U., and urban students. However, voluntary withdrawals were not found to differ from persisting students on the academic talent indices of SAT scores and high school rank. In addition, the voluntary withdrawals achieve very near their predicted level while in attendance at I.U. (Chase et al. 1976). Why, given the apparent academic ability and achievement of the voluntary withdrawal group and their similarity to persisters, do these students choose to leave the University? This question, raised by Chase et al., provided the impetus for this study.

The present study examined three subgroups of voluntary withdrawals: nonacademic dropouts, students who terminate their educational experience; nonacademic stopouts, students who temporarily interrupt their educational experience, returning to the same institution at a later date; and transfers, students who temporarily interrupt their educational experience, resuming their collegiate career at another institution. The study attempts to 1) survey students who discontinued their education at Indiana University in spite of satisfactory academic progress, 2) ascertain the degree to which various personal, academic, and financial factors entered into the decision to terminate or interrupt their educational program, and 3) determine the student's employment and educational situation during the academic semester subsequent to withdrawal.

Design of the Study

The present study was designed to examine the attitudes and characteristics of voluntary withdrawals from Indiana University.

Population and samples

The present study employed the term "voluntary withdrawal" to identify students who exited Indiana University

before completing a baccalaureate degree and were academically qualified to continue their program of study (cumulative grade point of 1.90 or higher if they were freshmen and 2.00 or higher if they were upperclassmen). In a concurrent study by Brigman and Jacobs (1979) that employed the same definition for nonacademic dropouts, it was found that of the 5052 freshmen who entered Indiana University's Bloomington campus in the Fall of 1974, nine hundred thirty-seven (937) students could be classified as nonacademic dropouts (voluntary withdrawals) at the beginning of the third academic year. The largest percentage of these voluntary withdrawals exited the University at the end of their second year, Spring 1976. The present study selected to focus on these 360 students who elected, two years after their initial enrollment, to discontinue their educational program in the Indiana University System. This group of voluntary withdrawals were selected because of the proportionate size of the group, because of their two years of persistence, and because of the recency of their withdrawal; the recency of the withdrawal hopefully allowed for a more accurate recall of the reasons for exiting.

At the beginning of the Spring semester of 1977, the University enrollment records were examined to determine if any of these students had re-enrolled in any of the System's institutions. Based on the Spring 1977 enrollment data, the 360 voluntary withdrawals were divided into dropouts and stopouts. The 303 voluntary dropouts had not re-enrolled in the University System during the calendar year (May 1976 thru May 1977). The voluntary stopouts had re-enrolled in an I.U. institution after an absence of seven months (May 1976 thru December 1976).

Information from the University student records

Academic and biographic information and the student's most recent location of residency were obtained from the University's computerized student data system. The biographic information on each student included sex, size of high school graduation class, date of admission to I.U., I.U. campus attended during Spring 1976, and academic major during Spring 1976.

The academic information extracted from the student's record included rank in high school graduation class, Scholastic Aptitude Test verbal score (SATV), Scholastic Aptitude Test mathematics score (SATM), first semester grade point average (Fall 1974 GPA), cumulative hours of credit at I.U. by the end of Spring 1976, and cumulative grade point average at I.U. by the end of Spring 1976. An additional academic measure, relative rank in the high school graduation class, was computed for each student. Relative rank expresses a student's rank in his/her graduation class in terms of the percentage of students who ranked higher. This controls for the varying size of high schools attended by students who enter I.U.

Two sets of address labels were obtained from the University's computer records. The parents' home address was used as the most recent location of residency and forwarding was requested on the mailings.

Survey questionnaires

The Bureau of Evaluative Studies and Testing developed a pilot questionnaire to be administered by telephone to a random sample of the voluntary dropouts and stopouts. Personnel from the University Division on the Bloomington campus administered the telephone questionnaire during March 1977. Based on the responses to the telephone questionnaire and other similar student questionnaires, a list was generated of 32 items which were considered to play a role in the students' decisions to interrupt or discontinue their educational program at Indiana University. These items comprised an attitudinal section on two parallel forms of a postal questionnaire developed by the Bureau for the voluntary dropouts and the stopouts. The attitudinal section of the questionnaire was designed to assess the degree to which the 32 items, in the opinion of the students, had affected their decision to exit the University. The following four categories were provided for the student's evaluation of each item:

Very important factor in my decision not to return to I.U. 3
Moderately important factor in my decision not to return to I.U. 2
Slightly important factor in my decision not to return to I.U. 1
Not a factor in my decision not to return to I.U. 0

The biographic section of the questionnaire was designed to collect information about the student during the Spring 1976 at I.U., their educational or employment activities during the fall of 1976, and their future plans to return to Indiana University. (See questionnaires in Appendix.)

Procedures

Each questionnaire was mailed with a cover letter from the dean of the University Division explaining the purpose of the survey and soliciting the student's participation in the study. The letters were personally addressed and a stamped return envelope addressed to the Bureau was included in each of the mailings (see the letters in the Appendix).

The first mailing to the voluntary dropouts was on April 22, 1977. Three weeks after the initial mailing a follow-up mailing was sent to those individuals who had not responded to the survey. The first mailing to the voluntary stopouts was on June 23, 1977. Again, three weeks after the

initial mailing a follow-up mailing was sent to the non-respondents. Because the mailings to the stopouts were not during a major semester, a lower response rate to the survey was expected. Therefore, a telephone follow-up was the third phase of the solicitation of responses from the stopouts.

Analyses

A preliminary analysis compared all of the voluntary dropouts to the stopouts on the information available from the University's student data systems. Analyses of variance were performed to test for differences between the 360 stopouts and dropouts in the size of their high school graduation classes, their relative rank in the high school graduation class, SATV, SATM, first semester GPA, cumulative hours at I.U. and cumulative GPA at I.U.

A basic question in all survey research is whether the subjects who respond to the survey are representative of the original groups to whom the survey was distributed. To determine the degree of the response bias in the survey data, respondents were compared to nonrespondents on several measures that were available from the students' University records. Analyses of variance were employed to test for differences between the two groups of stopouts and between the two groups of dropouts.

In addition, the measures from the students' records at the University provided a basis for comparing the stopouts and the dropouts who returned surveys. Again, one-way analyses of variance were employed to test for differences between the two groups of respondents.

The first step in the analysis of the survey data was to compare the percent of the dropout and the stopout groups on each response alternative for the biographic questions on the survey. These questions dealt with the status of those students at I.U. during Spring 1976, their educational/employment status during Fall 1976, and their plans to return to I.U. Chi square tests were employed to test for significant differences between the stopouts and the dropouts.

The next step in the analysis was to examine the students' attitudes about what was important in their decision to voluntarily interrupt or discontinue their education at Indiana University. The percentages of the groups selecting each alternative and the median response on each of the 32 attitudinal items were examined. Median tests were performed to evaluate group differences on the individual attitudinal items.

Because responses to a single item are not stable or reliable over different groups and/or survey periods, the items were clustered into scales that would have greater

combined stability. The scales reflect the dimensions that students' perceived as important in their decision to exit the University. A factor analysis was performed to determine the number of dimensions reflected in the responses to the 32 items and to determine the assignment of the items to dimensions (scales). Since it was expected that the dimensions were correlated with each other, an oblique rotational procedure was used. A scale score was computed for each student on each of the dimensions.

The final analysis determined if there were any differences between the males and females and between the groups of voluntary withdrawals on the dimensions involved in their reasons for exiting the University. A multivariate analysis of variance was performed to determine the differences in the groups on the scales.

Results

The present study began with an examination of the differences between the two groups of voluntary withdrawals on academic measures available from the University's student data system. Employing means, standard deviations and one-way analyses of variance, the two groups were compared on seven measures. The information in Table 1 indicated that both populations, stopouts and dropouts, exhibited equivalent potential for collegiate success based on high school information and the Scholastic Aptitude Test scores. Indeed, the stopouts and dropouts achieved similar grades during their first semester and maintained nearly identical grade point averages on similar course loads during the two year period of enrollment at I.U.

A biographic measure available on the University files was the sex of the student. There were 33 males and 24 females in the stopout population; the dropout population was composed of 122 males and 181 females. The ratio of males to females in the two groups of voluntary withdrawals were significantly different ($X^2=5.38$; $df=1$; $p \leq .05$). Males were overrepresented among the stopouts while females were overrepresented among the dropouts.

In the present study, 58 percent of the stopouts and 54 percent of the dropouts responded to the survey. Among the survey returns from the dropouts, twelve indicated that they had completed a two year degree program and five did not provide usable data or were returned by the postal service. Thus, these seventeen dropouts were eliminated from any further analyses.

In survey research it is necessary to determine if the individuals who responded to a survey were representative of the populations to whom the surveys were distributed, i.e., the degree of bias among the respondents. Response bias is the systematic difference between those individuals

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics on Seven Academic Measures for the Populations of Voluntary Withdrawals

STATISTICS	STOPOUTS	DROPOUTS	TOTAL
Size of High School Graduation Class			
Mean	440	396	403
Standard Deviation	283	258	262
Number of Students	55	293	348
Relative Rank in High School Graduation Class[a]			
Mean	30	26	26
Standard Deviation	23	20	20
Number of Students	55	293	348
Scholastic Aptitude Test - Verbal			
Mean	484	473	475
Standard Deviation	107	98	99
Number of Students	55	283	338
Scholastic Aptitude Test - Mathematics			
Mean	509	502	503
Standard Deviation	95	98	98
Number of Students	55	283	338
Fall 1974 Grade Point Average (GPA)			
Mean	2.93	2.92	2.92
Standard Deviation	0.74	0.55	0.58
Number of Students	57	303	360
Cumulative Hours Obtained at I. U.			
Mean	54.6	53.9	54.0
Standard Deviation	8.7	9.4	9.3
Number of Students	57	303	360
Cumulative GPA Obtained at I. U.			
Mean	2.80	2.84	2.84
Standard Deviation	0.55	0.51	0.51
Number of Students	57	303	360

[a]Relative rank is an I.U. admission measure which is obtained by dividing a student's rank in the high school graduation class by the size of the high school graduation class and multiplying the results by 100.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics on Seven Academic Measures for the Respondents and Nonrespondents to the Survey of Voluntary Dropouts

STATISTICS	RESPONDENTS	NONRESPONDENTS	TOTAL
Size of High School Graduation Class			
Mean	390	401	396
Standard Deviation	(253)	263	258
Number of Students	142	138	280
Relative Rank in High School Graduation Class[a]			
Mean	24	28	26
Standard Deviation	20	19	20
Number of Students	142	138	280
Scholastic Aptitude Test-Verbal			
Mean	474	476	475
Standard Deviation	95	103	99
Number of Students	137	131	268
Scholastic Aptitude Test-Mathematics			
Mean	507	495	501
Standard Deviation	102	97	100
Number of Students	137	131	268
Fall 1974 Grade Point Average (GPA)			
Mean	2.96	2.86	2.92
Standard Deviation	0.52	0.58	0.55
Number of Students	147	139	286
Cumulative Hours Obtained at I. U.			
Mean	54.3	53.0	53.7
Standard Deviation	8.6	10.5	9.5
Number of Students	147	139	286
Cumulative GPA Obtained at I. U.			
Mean	2.89	2.77	2.83
Standard Deviation	0.48	0.53	0.51
Number of Students	147	139	286

[a]Relative rank is an I.U. admission measure which is obtained by dividing a student's rank in the high school graduation class by the size of the high school graduation class and multiplying the results by 100.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics on Seven Academic Measures for the Respondents and Nonrespondents to the Survey of Voluntary Stopouts

STATISTICS	RESPONDENTS	NONRESPONDENTS	TOTAL
Size of High School Graduation Class			
Mean	456	417	440
Standard Deviation	303	254	283
Number of Students	33	22	55
Relative Rank in High School Graduation Class[a]			
Mean	32	28	30
Standard Deviation	25	19	23
Number of Students	33	22	55
Scholastic Aptitude Test-Verbal			
Mean	482	487	484
Standard Deviation	106	110	107
Number of Students	33	22	55
Scholastic Aptitude Test-Mathematics			
Mean	514	501	509
Standard Deviation	83	112	95
Number of Students	33	22	55
Fall 1974 Grade Point Average (GPA)			
Mean	2.95	2.90	2.93
Standard Deviation	0.82	0.62	0.74
Number of Students	33	24	57
Cumulative Hours Obtained at I. U.			
Mean	55.4	53.4	54.6
Standard Deviation	7.1	10.5	8.7
Number of Students	33	24	57
Cumulative GPA Obtained at I. U.			
Mean	2.85	2.74	2.80
Standard Deviation	0.59	0.48	0.55
Number of Students	33	24	57

[a]Relative rank is an I.U. admission measure which is obtained by dividing a student's rank in the high school graduation class by the size of the high school graduation class and multiplying the results by 100.

who choose to respond to the survey and those who choose not to respond. Bower and Myers (1976) suggested that among the students who leave a university before graduation, respondents to surveys tend to have stronger views and may have more positive attitudes about the academic institution than the nonrespondents.

One method of evaluating the degree of response bias was to compare respondents and nonrespondents on the measures that were available for both groups. In the present study information was available for all voluntary withdrawals on several measures. An examination of these measures revealed that there were nominal differences between the respondents and the nonrespondents among both groups of voluntary withdrawals, stopouts and dropouts. Tables 2 and 3 present the means and standard deviations on seven measures that were used to evaluate response bias among the dropouts and among the stopouts. One-way analyses of variance were performed to determine differences between each group of respondents and nonrespondents.

Among the dropouts, the respondents and nonrespondents did not differ significantly on five of the seven measures. However, the respondents were ranked significantly higher in their high school graduation classes ($F=4$; $df=1,278$; $p\leq.05$) and had obtained a higher cumulative grade point average at I.U. during the first two years of enrollment ($F=3.90$; $df=1,278$; $p\leq.05$).

Among the stopouts, there were no significant differences on the seven measures between those students who responded to the survey and those who did not respond. In summary, the differences between respondents and nonrespondents on the characteristics examined were negligible with two exceptions. It is suggested that the information from both of the surveys could be generalized to the populations of students who voluntarily withdrew at the end of two years of study at I.U. However, one should recognize that the respondents to the dropout survey were in general the better academic students.

Similar analyses were performed to compare the respondents among the stopouts to the respondents among the dropouts on the seven academic measures. Using the information from only the respondents to the survey, one-way analyses of variance were performed to determine the differences between these stopouts and dropouts. The descriptive information is available in Tables 2 and 3.

Of the students who responded to the survey, the dropouts differed from the stopouts on only one of the seven measures, relative rank in their high school graduation class. The dropouts ranked significantly higher in their graduation class than had the stopouts ($F=4$; $df=1,173$; $p\leq.05$). Examining the analyses of the SAT-verbal scores and the SAT-mathematics scores, these two groups were equal in aptitude. Grade point averages from the first semester of

the freshman year at I.U. and cumulative grade point averages during the first two years of enrollment suggest that the two groups achieved at equal levels. Furthermore, there were no differences in the numbers of credit hours completed, indicating that the grade point averages were maintained on similar course loads during the two year period.

The remaining analyses in this study dealt with the information collected in the survey questionnaires. Chi-square tests were performed to determine the differences between the stopouts and dropouts in their responses to the biographic measures. Table 4 presents the percentages of females and males among the stopouts and the dropouts on the biographic questions that dealt with the students' enrollment status during the Spring 1976.

Table 4

Percentages of Voluntary Stopouts and Dropouts on Biographic Measures During Spring 1976

BIOGRAPHIC MEASURES	STOPOUTS			DROPOUTS		
	Males (N=19)	Females (N=14)	Total (N-35)	Males (N=51)	Females (N=96)	Total (N=147)
Residence						
Indiana	83.3	64.3	75.0	69.4	76.0	73.8
Other	16.7	35.7	25.0	30.6	24.0	26.2
Enrollment						
Full-time	84.2	85.7	84.8	87.0	96.7	93.4
Part-time	15.8	14.3	15.2	13.0	3.3	6.6
Campus Attended						
Bloomington	100.0	86.7	94.1	94.0	91.6	92.4
Other IU Campus	0.0	13.4	5.9	6.0	8.4	7.6
Class Standing						
Freshman	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.0	1.4
Sophomore	89.5	92.9	90.9	94.1	87.5	89.8
Junior	10.5	7.1	9.1	2.0	9.4	6.8
Senior	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	2.1	2.1
Official Major						
Declared	84.2	92.9	87.9	66.0	72.6	70.4
Not Declared	15.8	7.1	12.1	34.0	27.4	29.7

Both the stopouts and the dropouts could be characterized as residents of Indiana, full-time students and sophomores on the Bloomington campus who had declared an academic major by the Spring 1976. As in the populations, the percentages of males and females comprising the two groups of voluntary withdrawals were significantly different ($X = 5.01$; $df = 1$; $p \leq .05$). A substantially higher percentage of the stopouts were males while a higher percentage of the dropouts were females.

The next set of biographic measures on the survey questionnaires dealt with the students' educational and employment status during the fall of 1976 and their future plans to return to Indiana University. Table 5 presents the percentages of females and males among the stopouts and the dropouts according to their responses to these five biographic measures.

Table 5

Percentages of Voluntary Stopouts and Dropouts on Biographic Measures in Fall 1976

BIOGRAPHIC MEASURES	STOPOUTS			DROPOUTS		
	Males (N=19)	Females (N=14)	Total (N=33)	Males (N=51)	Females N=96)	Total (N=147)
Employment Status						
Full-time	77.8	71.4	75.0	56.5	40.2	45.7
Part-time	5.6	7.1	6.3	6.5	6.1	19.6
Military	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	2.2	4.3
Homemaker	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	2.2
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3	4.3	4.3
Not employed	16.7	21.4	18.8	23.9	23.9	23.9
Educational Status						
4-Year College						
Full-time	5.6	14.3	9.4	30.0	45.7	40.3
Part-time	16.7	7.1	12.5	8.0	4.3	5.6
2-Year College						
Full-time	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	6.4	5.6
Part-time	11.1	0.0	6.3	2.0	1.1	1.4
Employer training	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.0	2.1	3.5
Not enrolled	66.7	78.6	71.9	50.0	40.4	43.6
First Semester at New Institution						
Fall 1976	21.1	14.3	18.2	35.3	41.6	39.4
Did not respond	79.0	85.7	81.8	64.7	58.4	60.6
Next Semester to Enroll at I.U.						
Fall 1977	73.7	64.3	69.7	5.9	11.5	9.7
Spring 1978	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	2.0
Summer 1978	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.9	0.0	1.4
Fall 1978 or later	10.6	0.0	6.0	7.8	1.0	3.4
Did not respond	15.8	35.7	24.2	82.4	84.5	83.5
Returning Campus[a]						
Bloomington	100.0	85.7	93.9	94.1	85.4	88.4
Other I.U. Campus	0.0	14.3	6.1	5.9	14.6	11.6

[a]Percentages of the voluntary withdrawals who indicated that they planned to enroll at I.U. in the future.

The stopouts and dropouts were significantly different in their educational status during Fall 1976, the period

in which these individuals had discontinued their educational programs at I.U. The dropouts were more likely to have enrolled at another institution than the stopouts (X^2=6.71; df=1, $p \leq .01$). Forty (40) percent of the dropouts had enrolled as full-time students at another four-year institution during the fall of 1976 as compared to only nine (9) percent of the stopouts. Among both the stopouts and dropouts, more females than males enrolled full-time in a four-year institution during Fall 1976.

Using the information on educational status from the survey, the voluntary withdrawals were divided into three groups: 1) dropouts from higher education (n=72), 2) stopouts from higher education (n=24), and 3) transfers to institutions outside the I.U. system (n=84). Based on the survey responses, forty-seven (47) percent of the voluntary withdrawals who had completed two years at I.U., had transferred to other institutions of higher education. Subsequent analyses dealing with the reasons that the voluntary withdrawals exited the University system were performed on the three groups listed above.

The next set of analyses examined the responses of the voluntary withdrawals to the attitudinal sections of the survey questionnaires. The thirty-two items included in these sections were evaluated as to their importance in the students' decisions to voluntarily interrupt or discontinue their education at Indiana University. Tables 6-9 provide the percentages of voluntary withdrawals selecting each of the four responses to the 32 attitudinal items, i.e., the percentage selecting the responses of "not important" to "very important." A numerical scale of importance was created for the item response by assigning a value of zero to the response of "not important," 1 to the response of "slightly important," 2 to the response of "moderately important," and 3 to the response of "very important." Also included in these tables are the median responses to each item for the transfers, the stopouts and the dropouts. The median is the point on the scale where 50 percent of the group considered the item more important than that point, and 50 percent of the group considered it less important. The higher the median for a group the more important was the item in their decision to voluntarily withdraw.

Among the 32 attitudinal items in Tables 6-9, the dropouts indicated that the following items were the most important in their decision to exit the University: 1) unsure or undecided about career choice, 2) dissatisfied with personal achievement, and 3) lack of interest in program of study. The stopouts considered the following items to be the most important reasons for their decision to interrupt their educational program at I.U.: 1) unsure or undecided about career choice, 2) dissatisfied with personal achievement, 3) inadequate financial aid, and 4) accepted an opportunity for full-time employment. Finally, the transfers to other institutions of higher education considered the following reasons most important in their decision to leave I.U.:

Table 6

Percentages Selecting Each Response Alternative, Medians, and Factor Loadings of the Items Comprising Factor 1: Academic Environment

ITEMS	Percentage Response				Median			Factor Loading
	Not A Factor	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Dropouts	Stopouts	Transfers	
Class size too large	75.0	9.4	8.3	7.2	.19	.07	.18	.88
Classes too impersonal	68.3	13.9	10.6	7.2	.30	.21	.19	.87
Dissatisfied with teaching	67.2	14.4	9.4	8.9	.28	.25	.21	.77
Dissatisfied with grading policies	82.2	5.6	7.8	4.4	.16	.21	.05	.72
Inadequate academic advisory services	62.8	15.6	10.6	11.1	.36	.21	.28	.57
Lack of interesting or challenging programs	75.0	10.0	7.2	7.8	.24	.17	.12	.44
Dissatisfied with educational facilities	80.6	8.9	3.3	7.2	.12	.07	.14	.44

Cronbach alpha reliability index = 0.85

Factor Analysis: SPSS FACTOR -- Type=PA2/Rotate=Oblique/Delta=.2/Nfactors=4

*Significant at the .01 level
**Significant at the .001 level

Table 7

Percentages Selecting Each Response Alternative, Medians, and Factor Loadings of the Items Comprising Factor 2: Financial

ITEMS	Percentage Response				Median			Factor Loading
	Not A Factor	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Dropouts	Stopouts	Transfers	
Ineligible for financial a	73.3	6.1	9.4	11.1	.32	.30	.08**	.96
Inadequate financial aid	71.7	7.2	7.2	13.9	.30	.50	.08**	.76
Change in family's ability to provide financial support	81.1	3.3	7.2	8.3	.19	.17	.04*	.57
Lost financial aid	87.8	5.0	1.1	6.1	.14	.07	.02*	.51
Cost of out-of-state tuition[a]	87.2	3.9	3.3	5.6	.04	.10	.09	
Failed to be admitted to fraternity/sorority	98.9	0.0	0.6	0.6	.01	.00	.00	
Preferred two-year college program which is not available at I.U.	97.2	0.0	2.2	0.6	.01	.00	.02	

Cronbach alpha reliability index = 0.70

[a]Item loaded on two scales.

*Significant at the .01 level.
**Significant at the .001 level.

Table 8

Percentages Selecting Each Response Alternative, Medians, and Factor Loadings of the Items Comprising Factor 3: Educational/Career Focus

ITEMS	Percentage Response				Median			Factor Loading
	Not a Factor	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Dropouts	Stopouts	Transfers	
Unsure or undecided about career choice	53.9	13.3	11.7	21.1	1.07	1.79	.18**	-.73
Lack of interest in program of study	65.6	11.7	8.9	13.9	.38	.42	.16	-.69
Dissatisfied with personal achievement in course work	64.4	12.8	9.4	13.3	.42	.50	.15*	-.68
Personal adjustment problem	77.8	10.0	5.6	6.7	.22	.30	.06*	-.56
Course load too heavy	87.8	8.9	1.7	1.7	.10	.13	.03	
Accepted opportunity for full-time employment	72.2	3.3	8.9	15.6	.36	.50	.05**	
Felt isolated	82.2	10.0	3.9	3.9	.16	.10	.08	
Change in career plans to non-college vocation	85.6	5.6	5.0	3.9	.16	.10	.03*	
Personal health problems	91.7	2.8	1.1	4.4	.04	.07	.04	

Cronbach alpha reliability index = 0.74

*Significantly different at the .01 level.
**Significantly different at the .001 level.

Table 9

Percentages Selecting Each Response Alternative, Medians, and Factor Loadings of the Items Comprising Factor 4: Social/Environment

ITEMS	Percentage Response				Median			Factor Loading
	Not a Factor	Slightly Important	Moderately Important	Very Important	Dropouts	Stopouts	Transfers	
Dormitory environment not conducive to studying	85.6	8.3	3.9	2.2	.10	.02	.09	.48
Engagement or marriage	84.4	2.2	1.7	11.7	.17	.21	.04	
Roommate or dormmate problems	87.8	6.1	3.9	2.2	.09	.13	.04	
Dissatisfied with social life at IU	77.8	12.8	4.4	5.0	.14	.25	.12	
Cost of out-of-state tuition[a]	87.2	3.9	3.3	5.6	.04	.10	.09	
Family moved out-of-state	95.0	2.2	0.6	2.2	.03	.04	.02	
Change in career plans to program unavailable at IU but provided by another university	75.6	3.3	5.0	16.1	.09	.09	.29*	
Failure to be admitted to Upper Division program of choice	92.8	1.1	1.1	5.0	.03	.04	.14	
Family health problems	91.7	4.4	2.8	1.1	.06	.04	.03	
Commuting distance too great	90.0	3.3	4.4	2.2	.07	.04	.05	

Cronbach alpha reliability index = 0.12

[a]Item loaded on two scales.

*Significantly different at the .01 level.

1) change in career plans to a program not provided by I.U. but available at another university, 2) inadequate academic advising, and 3) dissatisfied with teaching. It should be noted that the stopouts rated the cited reasons higher on the numerical scale of importance than the dropouts. On the other hand, the transfers indicated that all of their reasons were less important to them than those cited by the other two groups.

Combining the responses of the three groups, it was found that 46 percent of the voluntary withdrawals indicated that being unsure or undecided about their career choice was important in their decision to withdraw from the University. Thirty-five (35) percent of the withdrawals considered their dissatisfaction with their personal achievement to be important in their decision to withdraw. However, with the exception of only one item, responses to the attitudinal items by the majority of voluntary withdrawals were in the range of 'slightly important' in the decision to withdraw.

Median tests were performed to determine the differences between the three groups of voluntary withdrawals on the thirty-two attitudinal items. It was found that the voluntary stopouts and dropouts ranked nine reasons as significantly more important in their decision to exit the University than did the transfers.

1- unsure or undecided about career choice
2- opportunity for full-time employment
3- inadequate financial aid
4- ineligible for financial aid
5- dissatisfied with personal achievement
6- personal adjustment problems
7- change in family's financial support
8- change to noncollege vocation
9- lost financial aid

The transfers ranked only one reason significantly higher than the stopouts and dropouts - "change to program not available at I.U."

Although the responses to individual attitudinal items were of interest in this study, it was more important to examine the overall dimensions involved in the withdrawal decision. The factor analysis of the responses to the 32 attitudinal items of the stopout and dropout questionnaires revealed four significant dimensions (scales).* The order in which the dimensions emerged reflected an attitudinal hierarchy which indicated the importance of each dimension in the voluntary withdrawals' decisions to exit the University. Table 10 presents the relationships among the four dimensions that emerged in the factor analysis.

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*The SPSS FACTOR program was used to perform an oblique factor analysis with squared multiple correlations entered for the diagonal elements of the correlation matrix; delta was set at .30.

Table 10
Correlations Among the Four Attitudinal Dimensions

		Dimensions			
		1	2	3	4
Dimensions	1	1.00			
	2	-0.13	1.00		
	3	-0.36	-0.07	1.00	
	4	0.23	-0.03	-0.04	1.00

The degree of association between an individual attitudinal item and the underlying dimension was reflected in the loading of the item on the scale. The higher the value of the loading, the greater the association was between the item and the dimension. Although labeling of the dimension was an interpretive/theoretical problem, not a statistical one, the inspection of the items loading on a dimension usually revealed the underlying dimension which accounted for the interrelationship among the items. Again, the higher the loading of an item on the scale, the greater was the reliance upon the item in the labeling of the scale.

Table 6 presents the items that were associated with the first dimension that emerged in the factor analysis. This scale accounted for 17.8 percent of the variability of the responses to the 32 attitudinal items. All of the seven items associated with the first scale had substantial loadings (factor loadings ≥ 0.40). These items emphasized the classroom environment and other aspects of the academic program at I.U. There was a sense of anonymity reflected in the items dealing with the size and impersonal nature of the instructional environment. Thus, the label of the first scale reflects attitudes towards the "Academic Environment" that contributed to the decision to withdraw from the University.

The items associated with the second dimension that emerged in the factor analysis are presented in Table 7. The second scale accounted for 9.7 percent of the variability in the responses to the 32 attitudinal items. Four of the seven items associated with this scale had substantial loadings; each of these items reflected aspects of the withdrawal decision that were related to financial limitations. Thus, the second scale was labeled "Financial" in reference to attitudes towards financial demands of attending the University.

Table 8 presents the items that comprise the third dimension that emerged in the factor analysis. Seven (6.6) percent of the variability in the responses to the 32 items

were accounted for by the third scale. Of the nine items loading on the third scale, four had loadings greater than 0.40. The items on this scale reflected aspects of the withdrawal decision that related to the students' satisfaction with their academic program or career choice and their degree of commitment to achieving program and career goals. Thus, this third scale was labeled "Career Focus," reflecting the attitudes about their chosen academic program and their career focus that related to the decision to withdraw from I.U.

The last significant dimension to emerge from the factor analysis contained the ten items presented in Table 9. Only one of the items had a substantial loading on this scale and the scale accounted for only 5.3 percent of the variability in the responses of the voluntary withdrawals to the 32 items in the attitudinal section. An examination of the ten items on the fourth scale revealed aspects of the withdrawal decision that related to the social anonymity or personal considerations. This scale was labeled "Social Environment."

The last analysis in this study required that a score be computed from the student's responses to the attitudinal items on each scale; i.e., there were four scores per student. These scale scores indicated the extent to which an underlying dimension contributed to the decision to voluntarily withdraw from the University. Employing standardized scale scores, comparisons were made between the attitudes of transfers, stopouts and dropouts and between males and females. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) with the four scale scores as the dependent measures was employed to determine the differences in the attitudes that contributed to the decision to exit the University. Table 11 presents the results of the MANOVA.

Table 11

Multivariate Analysis of Variance
for the Three Groups of Voluntary Withdrawals by Sex
on the Four Dimensions Involved in the Exiting Decision

Source of Variation	Hypothesis/Error df	Approximate F	p
Groups	8 / 340	6.38	<.01
Sex	4 / 171	0.84	ns*
Groups by Sex	8 / 340	1.44	ns*

*Nonsignificant; probability greater than 0.05.

Based on the results of the analysis presented in Table 11, there was no significant difference between the males and the females in the reasons they considered important in the decision to leave the University. Also, there

was no differential relationship between the sexes among the three groups of voluntary withdrawals. However, there was a significant difference between the three groups of voluntary withdrawals in their decisions to leave the University.

Univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine which scales reflected the differences between the three groups of voluntary withdrawals. Table 12 presents the results of the univariate ANOVAs. Two of the four scales, Career Focus and Financial, reflected significant differences between the transfers, stopouts and dropouts in the dimensions considered important in the withdrawal decision.

Table 12

Univariate Analyses of Variance of Differences between Transfers, Stopouts and Dropouts on the Four Dimensions of the Withdrawal Decision

Source of Variation	Dimension	Mean Square	Univariate* F	p.
Group	Academic Environment	0.43	0.50	ns†
(Transfers vs	Financial	5.91	6.62	<.01
Stopouts vs	Career Focus	11.02	14.83	<.01
Dropouts)	Social Environment	0.76	1.22	ns†
Multivariate	F=6.38 df=8/340			p<.01

*df=2/174
†Nonsignificant; probability is greater than .05.

Table 13

Descriptive Statistics for the Three Groups of Voluntary Withdrawals on Two Attitudinal Scales Related to the Withdrawal Decision

Descriptive Statistics	Dropouts (n=72)	Stopouts (n=24)	Transfers (n=84)
Career Focus Scale			
Mean	-0.25	-0.52	0.36
Standard Deviation	0.94	1.57	0.69
Financial Scale			
Mean	0.24	0.23	-0.27
Standard Deviation	1.04	1.16	0.77

The impact on the exiting decision of aspects relating to the student's career focus was different for the three groups of voluntary withdrawals. The standardized scale means presented in Table 13 indicate that for the three groups, stopouts and dropouts considered aspects of the withdrawal decision that reflected an absence of a career focus as significantly more important in their decision than did the transfers. Finally, the dropouts and stopouts considered financial limitations significantly more important than did the transfers in their decision to exit the University.

Discussion

At Indiana University's Bloomington campus, it has been found that of ten freshmen who enrolled in the fall of 1974, three had exited from the University System by the beginning of their third academic year. The students who exited the University can be classified as academic dropouts and voluntary withdrawals.*

In a study by Brigman and Jacobs (1979), it was found that students who voluntarily withdrew before the beginning of their third academic year at I.U. could be characterized as being predominantly females with a disproportionately high representation of out-of-state students. The voluntary withdrawals had applied and been admitted to the University a little later than their peers who had persisted. In addition, they tended not to provide Scholastic Aptitude Test scores on their admission records. At the time that the students were admitted to the University, the voluntary withdrawals differed from their peers who persisted in two areas: they were from smaller high schools and were ranked lower in their high school graduation classes. During their first semester at I.U., the voluntary withdrawals' achievement was equal to their peers who persisted into the third year but by the time they exited the University their cumulative grades over the period of enrollment had dropped and were significantly lower than the persisters.

The present study elected to examine the characteristics of the 360 voluntary withdrawals who discontinued their education after successfully completing two years of academic study at I.U. These students were initially divided into two groups based on the information available from the University records: 1) voluntary stopouts, students who had resumed their education in the University System after an absence of one major semester (Fall 1976), and 2) voluntary dropouts, students who had not resumed their academic program at any institution in the I.U. System after a one year period. Using the information from the University's student files,

*Referred to as nonacademic dropouts in previous studies by B.E.S.T.

the 57 stopouts were compared to the 303 dropouts. It was found that males were overrepresented among the stopouts while females were overrepresented among the dropouts. The two groups of voluntary withdrawals were equivalent in their potential for college study based on their achievement records from high school and their scores on admission tests. They had achieved similar grades during their first semester at I.U.B. and had maintained similar grades over the two year period on equivalent course loads.

Two forms of a survey were prepared and distributed by the Bureau of Evaluative Studies and Testing to the 360 voluntary withdrawals. Fifty-five (55) percent of those surveyed returned usable information to the University. An assessment of bias among the students who responded to the survey found that the differences between the respondents and the nonrespondents on the characteristics examined were negligible with two exceptions: the dropouts who responded to the survey had 1) achieved better than the nonresponding students in their high school curriculum and 2) achieved better during the two years at I.U. Thus, the dropouts that responded to the survey were considered to be higher achievers than their peers who did not respond. In addition, this response bias resulted in the dropout respondents differing from the stopout respondents in that they had achieved better grades in their high school years.

Based on the responses to the survey, forty-seven (47) percent of the voluntary withdrawals had transferred to another institution of higher education outside of the I.U. System. Voluntary withdrawals exiting at other points in their program may differ in their transfer rates. With the information on transfers, the respondents to the survey could be regrouped on the basis of their educational status during their third year since their initial matriculation at I.U.B. Students who had not continued their education during the fall of 1976 and had not returned to I.U. for the spring semester (n=72) were identified as the dropouts. Students who had not continued their education at any institution during the fall of 1976 but had reenrolled at an institution in the I.U. System for the next spring semester (n=24) were identified as the stopouts. Finally, students who had transferred to another institution outside of the I.U. System for the fall of 1976 (n=84) were identified as the transfers.

The examination of the individual aspects of the decisions of the voluntary withdrawals to exit the University found that these students as a total group considered the uncertainty about their career choice and the dissatisfaction with personal achievement as dominant in the decision to exit the University. Transfers had indicated that their change to an academic program not available at I.U. and the dissatisfaction with the academic advising and teaching at I.U. were the more important aspects of their decision to exit the University. The stronger feelings about the individual aspects of the decision to exit the University were expressed

by the stopouts; transfers indicated that with one exception (change of program) each of the aspects were of less importance in their decision.

The thirty-two reasons listed in the survey as aspects of the decision to exit the University were grouped into four scales that reflected the dimensions of the exiting decision. The dimensions reflected were: 1) reasons related to the academic environment, 2) reasons related to the financial demands, 3) reasons related to the student's lack of a career focus, and 4) reasons related to the social/personal environment. The ordering of the scales reflects a hierarchy in the importance of the dimensions in the students' decisions to leave the University. All three groups (dropouts, stopouts, and transfers) could be characterized as leaving the University primarily for reasons that related to the academic environment. Finally, the study found that the stopouts and the dropouts differed from the students who transferred in that they felt that the lack of a career focus and interest and the financial demands were more important in their decisions to exit.

Tinto (1975) distinguished stopouts and transfers on the basis of institutional commitment and goal commitment. However, the present study suggests that the voluntary withdrawals possess the individual characteristics required for goal and institutional commitment, i.e., ability and pre-college schooling experiences. (A third variable, family background, was not investigated.) According to Tinto's model, therefore, it is the individual's experience in the collegiate environment that determines academic and social integration, and hence, persistence.

The student who enrolls at Indiana University, academically succeeds according to the University's standards, and then electively withdraws before completing a degree has been an enigma for a long time. This study has focused on the student who had proven academic abilities over a two year period of undergraduate study at Indiana University. Based on the information in this study and in a study of college persistence by Brigman and Jacobs (1979), several conclusions were drawn about the voluntary withdrawal. First, there was no difference in the academic capabilities of the student who persisted and the student who elected to withdraw before the beginning of the third year. However, it appears that a lack of coherence between the student's academic needs and the academic environment offered at I.U. leads to a decline in performance and finally to the withdrawal of the capable student from the University.

The variety of academic programs, people and opportunities offered at I.U.B. is a major factor in the recruitment of new students while the size of the institution is perceived as a drawback in coming to I.U.B. (Brigman & Morton, 1976). There is an obvious relationship between the size of the institution and the variety of academic offerings. In spite of the variety of academic offerings,

it appears that a number of students have not found a satisfactory match for their academic needs within the University community. The size of the institution may impede students in locating specific programs or provide some students too many options from which to choose.

Consumerism in higher education is a concept that is being widely discussed today. The product being bought is the academic training required to achieve entrance into a career. Thus, when a student-consumer is not satisfied with the product being purchased the student quits buying, i.e., withdraws. The student comes because of the academic programs and environment and the lack of satisfaction with the purchase plays a major role in why the qualified student goes.

Among the students that "go," there are strong indications that it is not a permanent departure from higher education. Specifically, among those students who successfully completed two years of an academic program at Indiana University, a high percentage (47 percent) of the voluntary withdrawals immediately transferred to another institution. The role of the academic environment in the withdrawal decision of these qualified students categorized into problems that relate to the general parameters of the academic environment (grading, teaching, class size, etc.) and to problems that relate to specific programs or the absence of specific programs in which the students are interested. For the students who transfer the latter has a greater impact on their decision to withdraw; the students leave in order to find programs that they believe are not offered at Indiana University. Among the voluntary withdrawals, the transfers are probably the most similar to the persisters at Indiana University; they did not indicate that financial demands, the lack of a career focus or the social environment were important in their decisions to leave the University.

For the students who discontinue their education or interrupt their education and later return to Indiana University, the problems with the academic environment are more general in nature. The stopouts and dropouts can be characterized as leaving the University because of dissatisfaction with the academic environment, the absence of personal career foci and the pressure of the financial demands of attending college. For the students who returned to Indiana University these factors appear to be more important at the time of departure but apparently more transient than for the students who had not returned.

For the student who successfully completed two years at I.U. before withdrawing, the financial demands of attending I.U. become a mediating factor in the decision to withdraw. Tuition and room-and-board for an Indiana resident costs between $800 and $2200 a semester. For a student from outside of Indiana, these costs range between $1300 and $2800 for a semester. The impact of the financial demands increases every year and affects the student's decision to

withdraw from Indiana University, whether temporarily or permanently. Cost of attendance and problems with scholarships and/or financial aid are perceived as impediments in the initial recruitment of an out-of-state student (Brigman & Morton, 1976). These financial factors may account for the finding of Brigman and Jacobs (1979) that a disproportionate high percentage of voluntary withdrawals are from outside of Indiana. Other institutions have sought to encourage the continuing enrollment of the out-of-state student by implementing a number of optional programs for tuition costs.

For many students the end of the second year of a college program may be viewed as a critical time of career commitment. The remaining collegiate program will be dictated by the students' selected majors. If there are any questions, uncertainty or indecisiveness about the choice of their major/career, the students must resolve them in order to continue effective progress in the academic/career continuum. The students who voluntarily withdrew after two years had selected majors but indicated that problems with their career foci had a significant impact on their decisions to stop out or drop out of Indiana University. The institution needs to continue its programs that aid the students in the selection of majors/careers. In addition, efforts should be directed toward providing the students who have selected a major the opportunity to reconsider/reevaluate their choices within the University's support systems, e.g., cooperative education programs, early practicums or internships in the major fields, and other more creative options that are directed at the potential voluntary withdrawals.

Last in the factors that affect a student's decision to withdraw was the aspect of college attendance that related to the social/personal environment. Where is the student's social/personal support system located? Does the student have a strong support system on the I.U. campus or is the student physically separated from such a system? The student who has not developed adequate support systems in the social environment that surrounds him/her at I.U. is more likely to withdraw.

With the University's concern for the retention of students, the voluntary withdrawals are a prime target group. However, programs to effectively increase the retention of these students are going to be more difficult to define than the programs which address the needs of the students who exit the University with more obvious academic deficiencies. The solutions for the problems of voluntary withdrawals are more subtle and complex. They may not result in immediate retention but in increasing the likelihood that the student will return to I.U. in the future. The challenge for the University is great in this area of retention. Any programs developed for the voluntary withdrawals will increase the effectiveness of the University experience for all students who persist at Indiana University.

Summary

This study focused on the 360 voluntary withdrawals who entered the University in the fall of 1974 and exited after the spring semester of 1976. Of the 360 students who voluntarily withdrew from the University after Spring 1976, sixteen percent (n=57) re-enrolled at Indiana University in Spring 1977. Based on information in the University's student files:

- males were overrepresented among the reenrolling students
- females were overrepresented among the students who did not reenroll at I.U.
- the two groups were equivalent on all measures of academic aptitude (high school rank, SATV and SATM) and academic success (first semester GPA, cumulative GPA and cumulative hours)

Based on responses to a survey of voluntary withdrawals:

- 47% had transferred to another institution during the fall of 1976
- 40% had dropped out of higher education
- 13% returned to I.U. after stopping out of school for one semester

Examining the individual reasons for leaving Indiana University it was found that:

- Dropouts
  - were unsure or undecided about their career choice
  - were dissatisfied with their personal achievement
  - lacked interest in their program of study
  - were very similar to the stopouts in their reason for leaving
- Stopouts
  - were unsure or undecided about their career choice
  - were dissatisfied with their personal achievement
  - felt that their financial aid was inadequate
  - considered the opportunity for full-time employment in their decision to exit the University
- Transfers
  - changed career plans to a program that they felt was not provided by I.U. but available at another institution
  - considered the academic advisory services inadequate
  - were dissatisfied with teaching at I.U.
  - considered nine aspects that were important in the withdrawal decision of dropouts and stopouts as significantly less important in their decision to exit I.U.

The four major dimensions involved in the voluntary withdrawals' decision to exit the University were:

- Dissatisfaction with the academic environment. This is the most pervasive dimension in the withdrawal decision.
- Financial demands of attending I.U.
- Lack of a Career/Educational focus or direction.
- Dissatisfaction with the social life at I.U.

Stopouts and Dropouts considered the lack of career focus and the financial demands as significantly more important in their decision to exit I.U. than did the transfer students.

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APPENDIX

Bureau of Educational Studies and Testing
INDIANA UNIVERSITY
•SURVEY OF NON-RETURNING STUDENTS •

General Information

Please check (✓) the appropriate response for each of the following items:

Sex: ____ female
____ male

When did you last attend I.U.?
____ Spring Semester 1976
____ Summer Semester 1976
____ Fall Semester 1976

What was your status the last semester you attended I.U.?
A. ____ instate student
____ out-of-state student

B. ____ part-time student
____ full-time student

C. ____ attended the Bloomington campus
____ attended another campus of I.U.
(please specify _____)

D. ____ had not officially declared a major
____ had officially declared a major
(please specify _____)

Present Situation

Please check (✓) the statement in each of the following items that most appropriately describes your present situation:

Present employment situation:
____ employed full time (40 hr. week)
____ employed part time
____ employed in military service
____ homemaker (full-time)
____ not employed
____ other
(please specify _____)

_____
Name of Employer

_____
Job title or description

Present educational situation:
____ not presently enrolled in any program
____ enrolled in employer training program
____ enrolled part-time at a two year college or vocational program
____ enrolled full-time at a two year college or vocational program
____ enrolled part-time at a four year college or university
____ enrolled full-time at a four year college or university

_____
Name of Educational Institution

_____
Academic Major

_____
First Semester you enrolled

(over)

When you were considering not to return to I.U. for the Fall Semester 1976 (August), a number of factors may have played a role in your final decision. Please circle the response which indicates the importance of each statement listed below to your decision not to return to I.U. the Fall Semester 1976.

Very important factor in my decision not to return to I.U..... 3
Moderately important factor in my decision not to return to I.U.... 2
Slightly important factor in my decision not to return to I.U..... 1
Not a factor in my decision not to return to I.U..... 0

Statement	Very Important	Moderately Important	Slightly Important	Not a Factor
Ineligible for financial aid	3	2	1	0
Family health problems	3	2	1	0
Class size too large	3	2	1	0
Change in career plans to non-college vocation	3	2	1	0
Roommate or dormmate problems	3	2	1	0
Commuting distance too great	3	2	1	0
Accepted opportunity for full-time employment	3	2	1	0
Lost financial aid	3	2	1	0
Dissatisfied with teaching	3	2	1	0
Change in career plans to program not provided by IU but available at another university	3	2	1	0
Dissatisfied with social life at IU	3	2	1	0
Engagement or marriage	3	2	1	0
Inadequate financial aid	3	2	1	0
Inadequate academic advisory services	3	2	1	0
Failure to be admitted to Upper Division program of choice	3	2	1	0
Failed to be admitted to fraternity/sorority	3	2	1	0
Change in family's ability to provide financial support	3	2	1	0
Lack of interesting or challenging programs	3	2	1	0
Dissatisfied with grading policies	3	2	1	0
Preferred two-year college program, which is not available at IU	3	2	1	0
Felt isolated	3	2	1	0
Cost of out-of-state tuition	3	2	1	0
Personal adjustment problem	3	2	1	0
Classes too impersonal	3	2	1	0
Personal health problems	3	2	1	0
Dissatisfied with educational facilities	3	2	1	0
Unsure or undecided about career choice	3	2	1	0
Dormitory environment not conducive to studying	3	2	1	0
Dissatisfied with personal achievement in course work	3	2	1	0
Lack of interest in my program of study	3	2	1	0
Course load too heavy	3	2	1	0
Family moved out of state	3	2	1	0
Other Please specify _____	3	2	1	0

In the space below, please provide any additional comments concerning those statements that you indicated as very important factors in your decision not to return to I.U.

Do you have any future plans to return to I.U.? ___Yes ___No

___Undecided

If yes, which semester/year? _____

which campus? _____

what would be your major? _____

THANK YOU

*This is the survey sent to the original group of voluntary dropouts. Minor alterations in wording of the survey were made for the voluntary stopouts.

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
The University Division
104 MAXWELL HALL
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA 47401

OFFICE OF THE DEAN

TEL. NO. 812—337-4981

April 22, 1977

Our records indicate that although you are academically eligible to continue your education at Indiana University, you have chosen not to attend I.U. this year. We are sorry not to have you as a student at I.U.

We feel that your decision not to attend I.U. is important and we would like to know what factors you considered in making your decision. Your assistance will be invaluable in helping I.U. to continue to meet the ever changing needs of our students. I would urge you to take the time (5 minutes) to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire as soon as possible. Your willingness to respond to this survey is critical. If too few answer, our information will not represent the attitudes and problems of the students who have chosen not to return to I.U.

If you are interested or have questions about returning to I.U. in the future, please feel free to contact Virginia Anderson at 812/337-7797.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Larry F. Campbell
Dean, University Division